

The Imperial Viennese Orchestra at the Villa Marina.

This article charts the rise and demise of the Imperial Viennese Orchestra who were engaged at the Villa Marina Gardens and Kursaal, Douglas, Isle of Man, from 1912 – the year following the opening of the gardens to the public for concerts – through the wonderful summer season of 1913 when the Kursaal was officially opened, until September 1914, when anti-German feeling inevitably forced the orchestra and its charismatic conductor Herr Simon Wurm to leave the Island.

The Villa Marina Gardens¹ were opened ‘in the rough . . . still under transformation, yet with sylvan swards and glades’ in 1911, and, with a local band in attendance, attracted tens of thousands of visitors that season. A fact-finding committee from the Douglas Town Council including an architect had earlier visited the resorts and spas of Harrogate, Margate, Eastbourne, Bournemouth and Torquay before the final decorations and furnishings were decided upon. The following year, the Lettings of Site(s) for Performance Committee of the Douglas Town Council at the end of discussions concerning the provision of music at the Villa Marina and Kursaal,² recorded their decision to ‘seek out and engage the finest band available to make music in the grounds’. The band eventually chosen was Herr Simon Wurm’s Imperial Viennese Orchestra,³ a typical Spa band or orchestra, comprising elements of a military band and a theatre band. From the evidence of the surviving concert programmes, the orchestra probably comprised three or four violins, ‘cello and bass, one flute player doubling on the piccolo, an oboe, two clarinets, a bassoon, two horns – a luxury for many spa orchestras - two cornets, one or two trombones, percussion and piano.⁴ The band may have been fewer in number at the beginning of the summer season, but was augmented at the height of the season in July and August, and included a number of players capable of contributing instrumental solos such as the cimbalom virtuoso Herr Josef Bene.⁵

However, the engagement of Simon Wurm and his orchestra met with a good deal of opposition peppered with blatant prejudice on the part of some members of the Promenades Committee of Douglas Town Council, as extracts from Council meetings between 1912 and 1914 increasingly testify. From the *Mona’s Herald* we learn that Messrs Keith, Prowse & Company⁶ were engaged to supply Herr Wurm’s Imperial Viennese Band of thirteen musicians, including Herr Bene, for Whit-week for a fee of £63 with the provision that Herr Wurm should conduct the band personally. The band consisting of twelve musicians would further be engaged from Whit-week until mid-July directed by the band’s leader, as Herr Wurm and Herr Bene, would be fulfilling engagements elsewhere, at a weekly fee of £54. From mid-July until the end of the season in late September the band would once again be directed by Herr Wurm himself for a weekly fee of £72.

No less than twelve other musical directors tendered for the coveted appointment including the well-known local conductors Douglas Buxton - considered unlikely to be able to engage the best professional players - and F. C. Poulter, a close colleague of Harry Wood, the musical director of the Palace & Derby Castle Company. A less expensive local band conducted by J. T. Lucas had played in the Villa Marina grounds in 1911 and was considered ‘a fair one, above average, good up to a point but with room for improvement’. A proposal that Lucas’ band could be engaged from Whit-week to mid-July when Wurm would be in England was rejected as the Committee were concerned that neither Lucas or any of the other contenders could guarantee to retain the same players each season with the result that standards would be difficult to maintain. It was also persuasively argued that the

presence of a first class band would attract more listeners and therefore offset the additional expense of such an ensemble. Furthermore, there was a real possibility that a series of Sunday concerts would be inaugurated.

‘Does the best band mean foreigners?’ asked Councillor Knox, a perpetual thorn-in-the-side on the Town Council in this and many other matters. Another member responded by reminding the Committee that Herr Simon Wurm’s band had performed before His Majesty the King and ‘enjoyed a reputation at Hastings and other watering places’. Yet another Committee member cited the experience of Southport where an expensive band had been engaged and attracted thousands of listeners; if the ticket price of the Douglas Sunday Concerts, for example, could be raised by 6d, the higher cost of Herr Wurm’s band could be absorbed after just a few performances. The Committee was also reminded that many visitors to Douglas were from Yorkshire and Lancashire and appreciated fine bands. An attractive scenario was drawn for them by suggesting that after a day enjoying the beauties of the Island these visitors would make for the Villa Marina rather than the Palace or Derby Castle if there was a high-class band in residence.

The matter had to be resolved quickly as there would be no professional band in place for the opening of the season, and Wurm was eventually awarded the contract by fourteen votes to nine based on his reputation and because he would ‘personally conduct’ the band for most of the season. The appointment of Herr Simon Wurm’s Imperial Viennese Orchestra was eventually confirmed and announced in the *Mona’s Herald* in May.⁷

The first season: 1912

The orchestra’s first concert in May was attended by five hundred people and was judged a great success; the Town Council’s gamble in securing the more expensive option seemed to have paid off:

The programme was high class and the first item had not been finished before the audience was charmed with the conviction that the City Fathers had secured for the town *for the first time* (my italics) a band of real musical artistes. Herr Wurm is an excellent conductor and composer of merit . . . the music was of a very superior order.⁸

The review also confirmed that in addition to Herr Bene the cimbalom player, Wurm himself appeared as a violin soloist, and it is possible that he directed his band violin in hand in the manner of Johann Strauss II in Vienna. The programme commenced with a Sousa march followed by Rossini’s *William Tell* overture, a *fantasie* on themes from Gounod’s *Faust*, a concert waltz, *Septembre* and a composition by Wurm himself entitled *Russian Patrol*.

Over one thousand people attended the first Sunday afternoon concert ‘reclining on comfortable chairs in the warm sunshine’, and that evening a concert party from the Douglas Head Entertainers also appeared. The three concerts on Whit-Monday were also well-patronised and included popular pieces by Bizet, Wallace – the overture to *Maritana* – Sullivan, Offenbach, Sousa, Wurm’s waltzes *Sunny Days* and *Espanola* and a selection entitled *Our Empire*. The programmes were changed daily with the orchestra appearing morning, afternoon and evening on the bandstand, and in the Kursaal during wet weather. As May slipped into June the weather remained kind and the orchestra continued to attract large crowds of around one thousand holiday-makers to the Villa Marina Gardens each

afternoon. The *Examiner*⁹ caught the mood perfectly as Offenbach and Sullivan gently rubbed shoulders with Suppe and Donizetti:

The music is of a very superior order, and there is an entire absence of the commonplace . . . the programmes included high-class compositions and those which ripple with a delightful sense of humour.

Wurm and his band quickly became a major attraction in the town and from the few extant photographs he appears to have been something of a flamboyant showman sporting luxuriant 'Kaiser Bill' moustaches; his band are shown wearing 'Ruritanian'- style band uniforms.

According to an advertisement in the *Mona's Herald*,¹⁰ 'The Gifted Herr Wurm's Band' gave concerts each morning, afternoon – a ballad-style vocal and instrumental concert - and evening on the bandstand, or in the small hall of the Kursaal during wet weather. There were also special concert nights such as that on Friday 7th July when the grounds were specially illuminated from 9.00pm. The band played with a variety of selections and Percy Tarling's Douglas Head Entertainers entertained with Manx Songs. Refreshments were served at 10.00pm.

Wurm and Bene returned to Douglas in mid-July as the summer season got fully underway, and at the height of the season in early August the band was engaged to provide music for a civic reception for eighty English doctors from the Medical Association (Liverpool) at the Villa Marina Kursaal, after which there was a gargantuan tea, consisting of five varieties of sandwich, five varieties of cake and thirteen different pastries, followed by an even more sumptuous five course dinner. Dieticians were presumably excluded from that particular convention! 'A very fine programme of music was rendered by Herr Simon Wurm's Imperial Viennese Band'¹¹ and included Fucik's 'circus' march *The Entrance of the Gladiators*, a selection from Monckton's *The Arcadians* and a novelty two-step dance arrangement based on Irving Berlin's *Alexander's Ragtime Band*, an early appearance of that ground-breaking piece on the Island.

Wurm presented his first Grand Wagner Concert on 6th August and on the 7th a 'Grand Descriptive Concert' featuring Tchaikovsky's '1812' overture with canon and fire effects. On 8th August a young prodigy described as the Wonderful Boy Cornet soloist, Master Grisha Wolcoviski, first appeared as a guest solo artiste, and continued to do so throughout the season.

In an effort to attract holiday makers away from the Palace and Derby Castle the management of the Kursaal presented a series of what we would call 'themed nights', such as the Grand Naval Night, a second Grand Wagner Concert, a concert of old English compositions, a Grand Japanese Night and a Grand Symphony Concert during August. Percy Tarling's Douglas Head Entertainers and other local artistes were often took part so that popular songs, ballads and sketches were a feature of the programmes. A second Grand Symphony Concert took place on 18th August; the '1812' overture was performed again on the 24th and the following evening, a third Grand Symphony Concert.

The *Mona's Herald*¹² gives us a flavour of an afternoon concert with Wurm's band at the height of the season:

On Sunday afternoon and evening . . . immense crowds assembled in the beautiful grounds . . . comfortably reclining on camp chairs listening to the charming music discoursed by Herr Simon Wurm's Viennese Band . . . whilst breathing in the health-giving breezes from land and sea.

The Lieutenant Governor Lord Raglan and Lady Raglan were present together with the Speaker of the House of Keys,¹³ the Mayor of Douglas and other dignitaries at Wurm's first benefit concert on 23rd August. The concert began as it often did with a Sousa march, followed by Wagner's *Tannhäuser* overture, Wurm's *Ciribiribin*¹⁴ and two cornet solos from Master Wolkoviski.

On 11th September, as an excellent season neared its end, both Harry Wood's Palace Orchestra and Wurm's Imperial Viennese Orchestra were invited to participate in the celebrations surrounding the opening of the new Noble's Hospital. Wurm's orchestra featured prominently with three concerts that day at 11.30, 3.00 pm and 7.30 pm in the Villa Marina Gardens with programmes that included a repeat of the '1812' Overture, and overtures by Rossini Thomas, marches and waltzes, selections from *The Mikado*, *Quaker Girl* and Verdi's *Il Trovatore* and *Aida*; and further Irving Berlin two-step arrangement: *Everybody's doin' it*.¹⁵

The concert programmes that Wurm developed during his first summer season at the Kursaal were extraordinarily innovative – even bravely conceived - for a spa-type orchestra, particularly the series of Wagner concerts and the performances of Tchaikovsky's '1812' overture with canon and fire effects.¹⁶ Wurm's ebullient and engaging personality and his excellent and varied programmes proved to be immensely popular, and most importantly, the revenue at the Villa Marina was up and more than exceeded expenditure.¹⁷ Even the name 'Wurm' came in for some good-natured banter, such as the following by 'Punch' in the *Examiner*:¹⁸

Several accounts of singing mice have been given in the papers recently. We have also heard excellent music from Herr Wurm's band.

In September the *Mona's Herald*¹⁹ announced that Herr Wurm's orchestra would be engaged for the 1913 season. A provisional agreement had been arrived at with Keith, Prowse & Company, and although the band costs for the season would be higher,²⁰ it was anticipated that the season would be extended by two weeks to 22nd September and the seventeen-strong band would be augmented to twenty-five musicians at the height of the season if necessary. There was less argument in Douglas Town Council concerning the engagement of the band for the 1913 season and the vote in favour of retaining Wurm's orchestra was carried by eleven votes to eight.

The second season: 1913

The Villa Marina Gardens and Kursaal opened for the season on 10th May with the advertisements emphasising the concert Hall, a recreation and conversation room, cafe, roof gardens and promenade. The grounds - 'A veritable 'Garden of Rest' – would be illuminated at night, and in addition to the daily concerts there would be concert parties, the Russian Ballet and special artiste engagements. On 24th May there was a series of special concerts celebrating Empire Day, and for a few weeks thereafter the orchestra was conducted by its deputy directors, Signor Paolo Marineri and Herr F. Zrubetsky, billed as 'sub-conductors', as Wurm was absent from the rostrum from the end of May until mid-June.

The largest-scale event of the season was the official opening of the completed fully Villa Marina Kursaal on Saturday 19th July by the Lieutenant Governor Lord Raglan accompanied by Lady Raglan before four hundred invited guests including sixty British journalists. The opening ceremony followed a civic procession accompanied by Wurms' band, and in the evening there was a Grand Concert with guest artistes Carrie Tubb, soprano, and Joseph O'Mara, tenor, and a full programme of music by Wagner, Gounod, Bizet and Liszt, shorter pieces, entr'actes and waltzes and a solo from Herr Bene.²¹ 'The concert was short but of admirable quality' and included another Irving Berlin novelty dance: the two-step *Ragtime Soldier Man*. Wurm's name was on the list of those invited to the supper with which the evening concluded.

The English press were unanimous in their praise of 'the latest addition to Douglas's multiple attractions' and 'a beautiful vision of a continental Kursaal'.²² The unconventional Chinese-style bandstand – in effect, a small open-air theatre with a closed back, decorations, trellis work and floral baskets - was also much-admired. The crowds sitting on the sloping lawns will have enjoyed excellent views, and audiences up to three thousand strong for the orchestral concerts in the large hall will have appreciated the ornate surroundings and vibrant sound.

In his speech Lord Raglan made the point that the secret of the success of the Villa Marina was that it catered

for a class of holiday-maker whom we in Douglas have hitherto been neglectful of. Large numbers of our visitors care little or nothing for dancing or variety turns . . . nevertheless they appreciate entertainment more staid and perchance more elevating of character, and this is just the sort of entertainment which it is intended to provide in connection with the beautiful gardens and hall which are owned by the Corporation of Douglas.

The implication was not hard to understand: the privately-owned Palace and Derby Castle catered for the northern working classes, whereas the Villa Marina Kursaal provided a high-class concerts and entertainments for gentle folk.

Troubled by the 'wurms'

Less than a week after the pageantry of 19th July, a letter to the editor of the Times²³ introduced a sour note onto the season by strongly suggesting that Wurm's band was 'not good enough for such fine gardens and Kursaal'. The letter, signed Fugue, 'a musician myself', and a visitor to the Island for thirty years, paid tribute to the Villa Marina – 'it stands unequalled in Britain' – but maintained that 'the famous orchestra was not the equal of those in Scarborough, Harrogate, Llundudno and Blackpool'. In his opinion the playing was 'mechanical', implying that the musicians were bored with playing similar programmes time-and-time again, and lacked any kind of refinement, light or shade. A particular selection from the *Mikado* 'would have received a better rendering from any of our Lancashire amateur orchestras'.

Fugue then turned his attention Wurm himself, remarking that his conducting style, with violin in hand, was marked by too many 'twistings, turnings and knee bendings and other mannersims', none of which made for good ensemble. As for the orchestra itself, the uniforms were grimy and unbuttoned on stage, boots and shoes unpolished and instrument cases left littering the stage in full view of the audience. His final withering blast concerned the music itself: '. . . ragtime music should be conspicuous by its absence from the Villa Marina. How the "famous" orchestra can stoop to play

such stuff is beyond me. Such abominations favour the very common'. There was no pleasing Mr. Fugue.

The above letter could be viewed as an early indication of the coming change in the fortunes of Herr Wurm, but that crisis was still a season away. Nevertheless there were certainly anti-Wurm sentiments expressed at the rival Palace & Derby Castle Shareholders' meeting in November that year²⁴ when Messrs Corney and Gill were accused of 'childish malice' when they proposed that those members of the Promenade Committee of the Douglas Town Council who were also shareholders in the Palace & Derby Castle Company should be excluded from the meeting. This undoubtedly reflected the smouldering jealousy directed at the Kursaal by the management of the Palace & Derby Castle Company who questioned the decision of Douglas Town Council to develop the Villa Marina complex, thus entering into competition with the established entertainment venues using tax payer's money.²⁵ The meeting turned sour when the relative merits of the Imperial Viennese Orchestra and the Palace & Derby Castle orchestras were discussed. The Palace & Derby Castle bands, it was maintained, 'had never been troubled by the "wurms" 'and the Company was not 'frightened by the opposition – especially when they know the "worm" was coming'. It may seem petty and trivial at this distance in time, but it was a portent of more unpleasant things to come.

Meanwhile, Wurm's band continued to attract large crowds to the Villa Marina gardens thrice daily and on Sundays at 3.00 pm and 8.15 pm and the local newspapers continued to be supportive:

This combination of clever instrumentalists interprets the works of the great classical composers superbly . . . and now and again breaks out into strains of the popular order.

The '1812' overture continued to be a firm favourite along with selections from Wagner's *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser* and Schubert's *Unfinished* symphony, and from time-to-time his deputy Paolo Manrineri took charge in Wurm's absence. The visitors clearly enjoyed hearing the most popular large-scale Romantic orchestral works even if the band lacked the impact of a full symphony orchestra. For those who just wished to enjoy the gardens, the grounds and the tranquil atmosphere, the café and reading rooms were open from 11.00 am until 10.²⁶ As September and the end of the season grew nearer, Wurm received permission from Douglas Town Council to enlarge the band players to twenty-five players.

The final season: 1914

Douglas Town Council's grudging acceptance that the engagement of a first class band was *the* essential ingredient for a successful season at the Villa Marina Kursaal was always at odds with their mandate to spend not one penny more than necessary, and this dichotomy came to the fore again during the first weeks of 1914.

There was strong feeling expressed at the meeting of Douglas Town Council on Wednesday 14th January about 'the propriety of re-engaging a band of foreign musicians'. A British band, it was suggested, should be engaged instead of the 'Teutonic instrumentalists' of Wurm's band. It was, however, stated that there were 'no grounds for complaint against their playing' and that the selection

of the music was 'discreet and very much to the taste of the Villa Marina visitors'. However, some Committee members felt that patriotism should play a part in the choice of band; British musicians should be given preference because most of the visitors were British and naturally wished to hear British bands.²⁷

A proposal to replace Wurm's band with that of Herr Karoly Klay was defeated by five votes to fifteen following a short but acrimonious debate, fully reported in the *Examiner*,²⁸ at which only anecdotal evidence was offered as to the quality of the rival band. It was also stated without any evidence being offered that ' . . . the dissatisfaction which certainly exists among Douglas ratepayers at present will be intensified rather than diminished'. (note: *IoME, ibid*) Committee members who favoured the re-engagement of Wurm and his band were referred to as 'supporters of alien musicians'. Bizarrely, in the light of events a few short months away, another objection to Wurm's Viennese Band put forward was that it was not Viennese at all, but consisted of musicians from all over Europe, mainly Englishmen.

The band of Gordon E. Stutely – 'an English band conducted by an Englishman' – was favoured by some on the grounds that it would be less expensive and could potentially save the Council between £382 and £404. Moreover, Stutely, who was highly regarded in Blackpool, Morecambe and Hastings, came with a glowing testimonial from Granville Bantock, no less.²⁹ As in the case of Karoly's band, no convincing assurance that Stutely's band would be as acceptable to the patrons of the Villa Marina as Wurm's emerged from the meeting, and no real evidence was advanced that 'there was a considerable amount of opinion that we should have a change at Villa Marina'.³⁰

The second cause of the Council's resentment were the fees they incurred for the services of agents such as Keith, Prowse & Company, and after learning that they were paying the agent £113 per week for the musicians who received only £78,³¹ it was decided to dispense with agent's services for the 1915 season:

All we suggest is that the money which at present goes into the pockets of agents might just as well be absorbed by the Municipal Treasury.³²

The phrase 'absorbed by the Municipal Treasury', however, fell short of a definite commitment to use the money saved on commissions – estimated to be up to 25% - on engaging a larger band for the 1915 season.³³

In an effort to take the heat out of the various arguments, the Council were reminded that Wurm's band 'has been the greatest success in Douglas . . . and a credit to the Isle of Man'.

There being no further arguments advanced, and with the start of the season only a few weeks away, the Committee narrowly voted to re-engage Wurm and the Imperial Viennese Orchestra, and in what can only be seen as a gesture of goodwill, Keith, Prowse & Company supplied the band without charge for Whit-week 'in order to give the band a good send-off' at the start of the season.³⁴

'Mr' Simon Wurm's last bow.

The summer season of 1914 was shaping up to be better than ever. When Wurm himself was away from Douglas fulfilling other engagements, a new assistant conductor, Herr Zrubetsky, took up the baton, and the band was augmented by additional players at the height of the season as in previous

years. The Sunday concerts continued to draw enthusiastic audiences as did the thrice daily concerts in the Villa Marina Gardens, or 'on the green' as the attractive area was sometimes referred to. The programmes were as varied as the previous two seasons, and often themed: 'Gilbert & Sullivan Nights', 'Humorous Nights', 'Popular Classical Nights' often featuring Wagner and Tchaikovsky, 'Patriotic Nights', 'Scotch', 'Irish' and 'Ragtime Nights' and 'Request Nights'. There were always supporting variety entertainments, occasional 'Song Nights' with local singers, firework displays, children's carnivals and Herr Bene and other instrumental soloists continued to charm audiences with popular, colourful solo pieces.

At the beginning of August the *Times*³⁵ noted that:

. . . Herr Simon Wurm's orchestra has now been brought up to full strength . . . every seat was filled and on Sunday the band received quite an ovation.

One descriptive piece in particular delighted the reviewer. Entitled *In the Forest*, it featured an off-stage cornet solo . . . 'a delightful tone picture'.

All was normal at the Villa Marina Kursaal the evening of the day of the declaration of war as the audience 'rocked with laughter' at Will Evans Company's side-splitting sketch *Harnessing a Horse*. The *Examiner*³⁶ recorded that the programmes of music during the first week of August were '. . . discreetly selected . . . both classical and popular', perhaps indicating that the music of Wagner and other German composers had already begun to disappear from the concerts. Just one week later the same newspaper³⁷ was at pains to reassure the public:

In order to remove misapprehension it is well to state that the fine band which Mr (no longer 'Herr') Simon Wurm controls includes but one member of German extraction, and he is a naturalised Englishman of twenty years standing, is married to an English woman and has a residence in England.³⁸

By the middle of August the name 'Imperial Viennese Orchestra' disappeared from all posters and newspaper advertisements for the Villa Marina Kursaal. The band was henceforth billed as 'The Famous Douglas Corporation Band' or 'Orchestra', and 'under the experienced direction of Mr Simon Wurm' was congratulated on the 'excellent standard of its programmes'. At this early stage in the conflict every concert opened with the Belgian national anthem, and whenever the Russian national anthem was played, the audiences rose to their feet and applauded vociferously. Although attendances were deemed to be fair in size, nothing could disguise the fact the visitor numbers had slumped dramatically.

The local newspapers were quick to catch the mood of the times, or perhaps create the mood: 'An English band and an English conductor . . . no Germans need apply' demanded the *Mona's Herald*³⁹ on behalf of the citizens of Douglas, and also led mounting calls for the name Kursaal to be 'dropped'.⁴⁰ During the final week of August the *Examiner*⁴¹ noted that although the thrice daily concerts were still attracting fair audiences 'in glorious weather' the 'depressing effect of the season's slump' in visitor arrivals was beginning to bite.

The Douglas Corporation Band continued to be 'congratulated upon the excellent standard of their judiciously selected programmes'⁴² for the Sunday concerts, but the reviews now sometimes failed to

mention Simon Wurm as the conductor. The final reference to him occurred in an *Examiner*⁴³ review of the daily concerts in the grounds during the gloriously warm final week of August:

The Douglas Corp Band under the experienced direction of Mr Simon Wurm provided a rich treat by delightful interpretations of classical and popular compositions.

By the beginning of September Wurm's name had quietly disappeared from all advertising and reviews, and on 3rd November Harry Wood's name appears in connection with the Villa Marina for the first time when his 'select orchestra' provided the music for an American Tea for King and Country. Wurm's name appeared for the last time in local newspapers the following year when the *Times*⁴⁴ picked up an intriguing echo of the Wurm years by noticing that tickets on Douglas trams still bore the following advertisement:

Herr Simon Wurm and the Imperial Viennese Orchestra at the Villa Marina, morning, afternoon and evening.

Maurice Powell, September 2016.

Notes:

1. Formerly the property of Henry Bloom Noble, and purchased from his estate for £60,000; the Villa Marina Gardens and Kursaal were developed at a cost of £25,000.

2. *Mona's Herald*, 14th February 1912.

3. Formerly the Original Viennese Orchestra, but also known as the Blue Hungarian Band and the White Viennese Band. Simon or Stanislaus Wurm, was born c. 1865 in Bavaria, and was the composer of the popular *Ping-Pong Waltz*. In c. 1892 his Original Viennese Orchestra played on Brighton's Pier where according to Imogen Holst, (1969) the daughter of Gustav Holst, the young composer played the trombone during the summer seasons to earn money to supplement his studies at the Royal College of Music. Later, c. 1898, Holst played in The White Viennese Band, and apparently learned much from the way Wurm conducted Strauss waltzes. There are other references to Wurm at Bexhill-on-Sea between 1884 and 1899, and again in 1904 when his band played at the opening of that town's Kursaal. He was also associated with Hastings where his band was engaged by the Entertainments Committee in 1904, and where during that winter he undertook to organise and fund entertainments there, Folkestone in 1905 and at the Oxford Music Hall, London c. 1909. See *Hastings and St. Leonard's Observer* 7th May, 6th August and 16th November 1904. The Wurm family included another brother, Moritz, who was equally famous as a band director associated with Folkestone, and possibly another brother, Erwin.

4. A photograph c. 1915 shows Wurm's band at Bridlington comprising four violins, two basses, six woodwind, three brass and one drummer. The local newspapers normally referred to Wurm's orchestra as a band as they did when describing the orchestras at the Palace and Derby Castle.

5. A stringed instrument related to the dulcimer family. In its modern form it was very common in Austria-Hungary from the 1870s and adopted as the Hungarian national instrument during the 1890s. The Manx local newspapers adopted the hybrid name 'czynbalom' for the instrument.

6. The *Mona's Herald*, 21st February, 1912. The Company entered into business as theatre ticket agents during the 1830s and eventually entered into music publishing, event and artiste representation.

7. The *Mona's Herald*, 22nd May, 1912.

8. The *Mona's Herald* 29th May. In reviews in the local newspapers phrases such 'of a very superior order' or 'of a high class nature' usually implied that some 'classical' pieces were included in the programme.

9. *IoMT* 1st June, 1912.

10. The *Mona's Herald* 22nd May, 1912.
11. *IoME* 3rd August, 1912.
12. The *Mona's Herald*, 14th Aug 1912.
13. The historical chiefs or elders of the Island, formerly known as the 'Worthiest of Men', but these days often referred to in less exalted terms. Self-elected until 1866, the House still retains the ancient number of twenty-four members.
14. An arrangement of Alberto Pestalozza's popular ballad of 1898.
15. For an extensive report of this event see the *Manx Quarterly* #11, October, 1912.
16. The orchestra probably performed a shortened version of the overture or possibly only the final section as they lacked the instrumental forces to perform the entire work. This was accomplished for the first time on the Island by the Isle of Man Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Maurice Powell, at the Villa Marina in 2015.
17. The *Mona's Herald*, 11th September, 1912.
18. *IoME*, 13th July, 1912.
19. The *Mona's Herald*, *ibid*.
20. The *Mona's Herald*, *ibid*. Whit-week: 17 players @ £80 including the fees of Wurm and Bene; May 17th – July 18th: 15 players @ £63, excluding Wurm's fee; July 19th-Sept 12th: £81 including Wurm's fee. Total cost of band £1,295 as opposed to £1029 for 1912. The cost of Wurm's band in 1913 rose to £1455 1s 7d, but there were additional performances, the extension of the season by two weeks and the cost of musicians' steamer fares.
21. See *Manx Quarterly* #13, 1913 for full details of the proceedings including the concert programmes.
22. See *Manx Quarterly* #13, 1913 for a selection of releases from the English newspapers.
23. *IoMT*, 26th July, 1913.
24. The *Mona's Herald*, 26th November, 1913.
25. This would remain a bone of contention between the Palace & Derby Castle Company and Douglas Town Council for decades. See Charles Fox, *Douglas Amusements, Their Origin and Development*, a paper delivered to the Dilettante Society in 1926, and published in the *IoMT*, 13th November that year.
26. A measure of the popularity of the Villa Marina Kursaal before World War I can be gauged from the official handbook which first appeared in 1913 giving the history, development and description of the complex.
27. Alien Music *IoME* 10th Jan 1914.
28. *IoME*, 17th January, 1914.
29. *IoME*, 17th January, 1914.
30. The *Mona's Herald*, 17th January, 1914.
31. Wurm's Band fees for 1914 were as follows: 15 musicians for 6 weeks @ £65: £390; 24 musicians for 10weeks at £113: £1130; Boat and other fares: 24 musicians @ £2: £48; benefit night: £36; Wurm's conducting fee 6 weeks: £72, a total of £1,676.
32. *IoME*, 14th January, 1914.
33. *IoME* 7th February, 1914. Keith, Prowse & Company responded to the Council's concerns by stating that they were 'not agents, but proprietors or traders' as Wurm's band had been 'our property for a number of years'.

34. The *Mona's Herald*, 29th April, 1914 reported that Keith, Prowse and Company had severed its relationship with Hastings Corporation over the matter of fees. The reference in the report: 'Our musical director, Herr Simon Wurm, will conduct until his engagement at Douglas call him there', strongly implies that Wurm was engaged in Hastings until the start of the Douglas season.

35. *IoMT* 1st Aug, 1914.

36. *IoME*, 8th August, 1914.

37. *IoME*, 15th August, 1914

38. According to another source, Herr Wurm's band at one time or another had 14 English, 4 Italian, 1 Russian, 2 Austrian and 1 German musician among its ranks. There is a suggestion in *Douglas Centenary 1896-1996*, published by The Manx Experience, that Wurm and his musicians were subsequently interned at Knockaloe Camp, Peel, but I have been unable to confirm this.

39. *The Mona's Herald*, 21st August, 1914.

40. The Manx Language Society had objected to the name 'Kursaal' from the beginning as it was 'inappropriate and not Manx in character'. A number of Manx names were put forward including 'Halley ny Bingys as Garey ny Ferrishyn' - 'Hall of Music and Garden of the Fairies' - which hardly trips off the tongue. All were turned down. The name 'Kursaal' was soon dropped from the name Villa Marina, but the main hall was not renamed the Royal Hall until the visit to the Island of King George V and Queen Mary in 1923.

41. *IoME*, 29th August, 1914.

42. *IoME* 22nd August, 1914.

43. *IoME* 29th August, 1914.

44. *IoMT* 11th November, 1915.